

A GAME**TECHNICAL FIELD**

The invention relates to a game. In particular, a combat game and associated playing area or board in which teams of players or game pieces combat one another using hand-to-hand weapons in order to achieve an objective. The invention also relates to a sword for use in the game.

BACKGROUND ART

For ease of reference only the present invention will now be described in relation to sword sports. However, this should not be seen as limiting as the principle of the present invention may also have application to other hand-to-hand weapons.

In combat sports that utilise hand held weapons such as fencing as well as older historical derivatives such as rapier duelling, combat takes the form of an individual game where players fence one another in one on one bouts or duels.

One derivation that has occurred in modern fencing to incorporate a team competition is that where teams of three or four fencers compete against one another whereby each team member fences the other team member in sequence. The winning team is the team with the highest aggregate score or highest number of victories. This approach is however not a true team event as fencers still compete against one another on a individual basis i.e. there is never a situation where one fencer competes against two or more fencers at any one time.

In eastern sword traditions such as the art of the samurai and the modern equivalent of kendo, the focus is also on the individual. Like modern fencing, bouts or combat are generally completed one on one rather than as a unit or team.

- Contrary to the above, historical battles normally involved massed groups of fighters that would battle as a unit. Unit combat presents many alternative tactics and as shown by history, a well coordinated unit could overcome a larger opposition through coordinated unit combat rather than as individuals combating
- 5 other individuals. As modern hand-to-hand combat sports are largely directed towards one on one combat, they do not offer the same degree of unit interaction as that which might have occurred in historical battles.
- One attempt that tries to address the use of unit combat in sword battles is termed 'fencing melee' (described on website: www.geocities.com/sword_and_mug/SWORD/fencingmelee.htm). The site appears to describe a game where units of fencers including a controlling player fence another unit including a controlling player. The end goal is to 'hit out' or overcome the opposing unit.
- This fencing melee combat offers no restriction in movement or any end goal apart from hitting out the opposing unit altogether in order to win. Due to the
- 15 unrestricted nature of movement, it is easy for more experienced players to win against less experienced players who are less aware of the tactics that may be employed. Also, with only a very simple and single end goal i.e. to hit out the other unit, tactics are more limited than what might otherwise be the case, for example in historical battles where armies would win by capturing land, capturing key strategic
- 20 items, killing of an opposing leader or group etc. Historically, simply killing off an enemy for the sake of killing was seldom the objective in itself. As a result, whilst fencing melee addresses some issues of unit combat, there are aspects where melee lacks elements of usefulness or spectator or player interest.
- A further team combat sport, but one that does not use hand-to-hand combat is
- 25 that termed 'The Ultimate Game'. In this game, teams of combatants aim to obtain

a particular objective, typically to obtain an opposing team flag. Combatants use guns armed with paint balls and can attack one another with the guns. The game area has a set perimeter however, combatants are free to move unrestricted within this area. Historical combat is not able to be recreated in this game at least 5 because the weapon is a gun which has a longer range than a physical weapon i.e. is not a hand to hand weapon such as a sword and thus the tactics employed in hand-to-hand unit fighting cannot be generally implemented. In fact, attacking as a close formation unit in The Ultimate Game is a poor tactic as it is then easy for an opposing team or individual in the team to shoot the entire opposing unit in quick 10 succession.

It is an object of the present invention to address the foregoing problems or at least to provide the public with a useful choice.

All references, including any patents or patent applications cited in this specification are hereby incorporated by reference. No admission is made that any 15 reference constitutes prior art. The discussion of the references states what their authors assert, and the applicants reserve the right to challenge the accuracy and pertinency of the cited documents. It will be clearly understood that, although a number of prior art publications are referred to herein, this reference does not constitute an admission that any of these documents form part of the common 20 general knowledge in the art, in New Zealand or in any other country.

It is acknowledged that the term 'comprise' may, under varying jurisdictions, be attributed with either an exclusive or an inclusive meaning. For the purpose of this specification, and unless otherwise noted, the term 'comprise' shall have an inclusive meaning - i.e. that it will be taken to mean an inclusion of not only the 25 listed components it directly references, but also other non-specified components or elements. This rationale will also be used when the term 'comprised' or 'comprising' is used in relation to one or more steps in a method or process.

Further aspects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the ensuing description which is given by way of example only.

DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

- 5 For the purposes of this specification the term 'combat' is used to refer to any type of combat action against another player such as fencing, sparing, hitting etc.

The term 'hand-to-hand' refers to the range of attack offered by the weapon. For example, for swords, the range for hand-to-hand combat is the distance that it takes for one person to hit another person or target with their sword. It should be

- 10 appreciated that the actual physical distance will vary depending on the arm length, body position, weapon length etc.

The term 'team' refers to a group of players on the same side that work together to achieve an objective.

- 15 The term 'hit out' is equivalent to loss of a combat bout by for example, hitting the opposing teams player or players a pre-determined number of times.

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of playing a team combat sport wherein:

- each team combats one another in order to achieve an objective; and
characterised in that the teams of players combat each other within a
20 predetermined game area using at least one hand-to-hand weapon to achieve the objective and,

further characterised in that players retain a distinct position or initiate play in a distinct position with respect to the game area.

Preferably the objective is to hit out a key player or key players on the opposing team.

In one embodiment, the key player may also be termed the flag bearer where the key player carries a flag which the opposing team tries to obtain in order to achieve 5 the objective. It should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the examples and preferences described for a flag bearer may also be applied to any key player and/or any other object that the key player may or may not be carrying.

In an alternative embodiment, the objective is to hit out all of the players on the opposing team.

10 It should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that many objectives may be undertaken such as capture of a particular item, hitting out all of an opposing team, capture of more than one key player and so on.

Preferably, players aim to hit a target area on an opposing player wherein the target area is selected from: the whole body; the head; the torso; the upper body; 15 the arms; the legs; the lower body; the groin; the back; at least one shoulder; a pressure pad or pads; and combinations thereof.

Preferably, multiple rounds are played, each round being complete once the objective is achieved.

20 Preferably, after each round, players in each team rotate position and a new player or players become the key player or players.

In preferred embodiments, the combat is scored using methods selected from the group consisting of:

the team that achieves the objective scores a point or points;

the team that wins the highest number rounds is the winner wherein each

objective achieved is counted as one round;

the team that wins the highest number of rounds after a set period of time where as many rounds as fit into that time period are completed and wherein each objective achieved is counted as one round;

- 5 and combinations thereof.

In one further embodiment, should a draw result, the draw may be resolved by completing one further round or by an individual combat bout between a player from each team.

- 10 Preferably, when a player is hit out by an opponent, they may not participate further in that round.

Preferably, if a player is hit out, that player remains idle during that round.

In an alternative embodiment, if a player is hit out, that player can again participate in combat during a round, after a predetermined period of time has elapsed.

- 15 Preferably, if a player is hit incorrectly or unfairly they may continue to participate in the combat.

Preferably, if a player is hit by a fellow team member, that player is then hit out.

Preferably, if a player hits themselves, that player is then hit out.

Preferably, pressure pads are used for registering hits, located on or approximate to key target areas on the player including the head, shoulders and chest.

- 20 Preferably, when a pressure point is hit, a visual and/or audio cue is emitted.

In preferred embodiments each team includes at least three players. More preferably, each team includes at least six players. Most preferably, each team

includes at least one forward player, at least one back player and at least one key player. In this embodiment, each team preferably includes three forward players, two back players and one key player. It should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that a wide variety of player numbers and arrangements may be used in accordance with the method and that teams need not have the same number of players.

Preferably, the movement of each player is defined by their designation selected from: forward player, back player, key player.

Preferably, forward players may initially move only within a restricted area within the game area. In preferred embodiments the restricted area is a lane approximately 10 metres long and 1 metre wide although it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that variations on these dimensions may be possible without departing from the scope of the invention.

Preferably, if a forward player steps out of the restricted area before they hit out their opponent, then they are hit out themselves. However, once a forward player hits out their opposing forward player, they can then move out of the restricted area.

Preferably, back players may move anywhere within the game area however, they must start at a predetermined fixed point within the game area.

Preferably, the key player or players have no restriction of movement within the game area.

In preferred embodiments, back players and the key player or key players move together as a unit unless both back players are hit out in which case the key player may move independently of the back players.

Preferably, an automatic hit out occurs on any player if that player steps outside of

the overall game area at any point of the game.

In one embodiment, hits are judged visually.

Preferably, the combat is judged visually using at least one umpire who may be responsible for different areas of play.

- 5 For the purposes of this specification, the term umpire is used however this should not be seen as limiting. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other types of terms may be used such as referee, judge and official.

- In preferred embodiments, umpires are used to control the combat and include a central umpire and key player umpires assigned to each key player. Preferably,
- 10 the central umpire oversees combat associated between any players not directly connected with a key player and key player umpires are responsible for judging combat around each key player.
 - 15 Preferably, one key player umpire becomes senior to the other when both key players are caught up in the same action.

- 15 Preferably, umpires are positioned along side lines of the game area and may be distinguished by use of a distinctive uniform.

- Key functions envisaged by the applicant for the umpires include indicating start of play, indicating fouls, unfair play and generally controlling the direction of the combat. In one embodiment envisaged by the applicant, control may be enhanced
- 20 by use of an umpires sword or similar game related device by cutting, pointing or sweeping movements. Preferably, if used, the umpire swords would also incorporate a remote control function where a button could be pushed, while pointing at a specific player to hit out a player in order to expel them from the court. Alternatively, the umpire may use the sword to strike the offending player to initiate
 - 25 a hit out.

In preferred embodiments, teams may have a captain to direct play and decide tactics and strategy before and during each engagement.

It should be appreciated by a person skilled in the art that, although a superior number of players against an inferior number should be an advantage, the breadth

- 5 of a sword swing, different types of weapons used by the teams, and/or opposing team tactics may make it difficult to strike an opposing player without hitting fellow team members.

According to a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a game area for playing a team combat sport substantially as described above wherein the

- 10 area includes:

a perimeter area;

at least two longitudinal lanes located centrally within the perimeter;

at least one positional marking behind the centrally located lane or lanes;

- and wherein each team includes at least one forward player, at least one
15 back player and at least one key player.

For the purposes of this specification, the term 'positional' refers to the arrangement of the players at any particular time, particularly at initiation of the sport in a similar manner to the way a netball or basketball court has positional markings incorporated on the surface where players orientate themselves or are
20 responsible for.

Preferably, the game area perimeter encompasses an area approximately the size of a standard basketball court.

Preferably, the number of lanes in the game area equals the number of forward players.

Preferably, the game area includes a total of three lanes for three forward players on each team.

- Preferably, the game area lanes are approximately 10 metres long by 1 metre wide and there is a separation of at least 1 metre between lanes, although it should be
- 5 appreciated by those skilled in the art that variations on these dimensions may be possible without departing from the scope of the invention.

- Preferably, the markings located centrally behind the lane or lanes are points at which each back player or players and each key player or players must start from at the beginning of each round wherein each round may be complete once the
- 10 objective is achieved.

According to a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a board game using the method substantially as described above, wherein each player controls the movements of game pieces designated as forward players, back players and key player or players of the method described above.

- 15 In one embodiment, the success or otherwise of a hit at hitting out an opposing player's game pieces is judged using a skill test, for example by use of buttons pushed on an electronic game controller such as that used for playing X-Box™ or Playstation™.

- In an alternative embodiment, the success or otherwise of a hit at hitting out an
20 opposing player's game pieces is judged randomly by use of a random number generator.

Preferably, the random number generator is a die or dice. In a preferred embodiment, look up tables are used (preferably in conjunction with dice) to determine the success of an attack.

- 25 Preferably, if a particular number is generated, that number equates to a mistake

by the player in a 'real' game sense like an own-goal in soccer or dropping of a weapon in a hand-to-hand combat bout. Preferably, where a mistake number is generated, that game piece is hit out and removed from the game.

Preferably, when a player's game piece or pieces are hit out, they are removed
5 from the board and may not participate further until either team achieves their objective.

In preferred embodiments, when a game piece is struck, a visual and/or audio cue occurs such as lights on the board flashing or an associated scoring machine acknowledging the hit.

10 In preferred embodiments, each player's game pieces are broken into at least one forward piece, at least one back piece and at least one key game piece. Most preferably, each player has three forward game pieces, two back game pieces and one key game piece. It should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that a wide variety of piece numbers and arrangements may be used in accordance with
15 the method and that player's need not have the same number of game pieces.

Preferably, the key player game piece is distinguishable from other pieces.

In preferred embodiments, the key game piece holds a player's flag and in order for the opposing player to achieve their goal they must obtain the flag from the key game piece. Most preferably this is achieved by striking out the key game piece.

20 Various media for playing the game are proposed. Preferred embodiments include playing of the game on: a flat surface; a board; a computer program; an internet based game; an interactive television; an interactive appliance including microwaves, refrigerators, telephones; a cellular phone; a game console; a scratch ticket; a single use card; a lottery card; a casino table; a television game show with

contestants; a radio game show with contestants; wireless application protocol (WAP) network; a slot machine; and combinations thereof.

It should be appreciated by a person skilled in the art that, although a superior number of game pieces against an inferior number should be an advantage, the
5 random generation nature of the combat between pieces and/or opposing player's tactics may make it difficult to strike an opposing player's pieces.

According to a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a game board for playing a combat board game substantially as described above between players using game pieces wherein the board includes:

10 a perimeter area;

at least two longitudinal lanes located centrally within the perimeter;

at least one positional marking behind the centrally located lane or lanes;

and wherein each players game pieces include at least one forward game piece, at least one back game piece and at least one key game piece.

15 Preferably, the game area perimeter encompasses an area approximately the size of a standard chess board.

Preferably, the number of lanes in the game area equals the number of forward game pieces.

20 Preferably, the game area includes a total of three lanes for three forward game pieces for each board game player.

Preferably, the markings located centrally behind the lane or lanes are points at which each back player or players and each key player or players must start from at the beginning of each round wherein each round may be complete once the

objective is achieved.

According to a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a game which includes:

- a game board substantially as described above; and,
 - 5 playing pieces; and,
- wherein the game is played in accordance with the method substantially as described above.
- According to a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a sword with a handle section and a blade section including:
- 10 (a) a central core common to both the handle and blade sections;
 - (b) one rounded cutting edge substantially along the length of the blade section;
 - (c) defined blade edges on the blade section;
 - (d) a blade cutting edge that is curved along the length of the blade section;
- 15 and,

characterised in that the rounded cutting edge is formed from a separate outer layer material which is attached to the central core.

The above sword has the advantage of having flat sides which can be used against the flat sides of an opponent's sword to flip and turn the opposing blade in certain types of deflections and attacks. A round shape sword or one without discernable sides slides around the other sword when used in attacks or deflections without necessarily being able to re-orientate or alter the attack angles of the opposing blade. Also, by use of a curved blade section, an opposing attacker's sword can

be effectively 'caught' as the opponent attempts to strike and thrown off line providing an opening to follow through with a counter attack. This type of catching and throwing action is not easily achieved with a straight round blade.

Preferably, a guard is located between the handle and blade sections.

- 5 Preferably, the central core is flexible, able to absorb at least some of the impact of a strike on another object, and is structurally strong. In one embodiment, the central core is made from bamboo. In an alternative embodiment, the core is made from synthetic material such as glass fibre rod or carbon fibre rod although it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other types of material may
- 10 be used to form the central core provided they meet the necessary flexibility, impact absorption and strength characteristics.

- Preferably, the outer layer material is attached to the core using a method that achieves effective adhesion between the core and the outer layer sufficient to ensure that the outer layer material remains attached to the core during impact and flexing that occur during use of the sword. Preferably the outer layer material is attached by stitching, glue or lamination. Most preferably, the outer layer material covers the length of the cutting edge and at least partially, the sides of the blade section. Preferably, the outer layer material is formed from leather. In an alternative embodiment, the outer layer material is formed from a synthetic material
- 15 such as rubber or foam.
 - 20

Preferably, an air cavity is located along the cutting edge of the sword between the central core and cutting edge outer layer material.

Preferably, the blade curvature is continuous along the length of the blade section.

- Preferably, the central core has a cross section that may range from being approximately circular to approximately elliptical and in preferred embodiments, the
- 25

blade section tapers from the handle to the tip. In one preferred embodiment, the blade section cross section tapers from approximately 25 mm in diameter at the base to approximately 20 mm in diameter at the tip.

Preferably, the handle section is formed from a central core surrounded by the
5 same material as the cutting edge outer layer material. In preferred embodiments,
the cutting edge outer layer material completely surrounds the core section along
the handle section of the sword.

In a preferred embodiment, rubber bungs are located at the base of the handle
section and tip of the blade section. This is included primarily for safety to avoid
10 any sharp edges that may be of danger.

It is envisaged by the applicant that weapons would be examined regularly or at
least after each engagement and replaced if damaged.

The sword described above has advantages over existing swords in being
lightweight, simple to produce and inexpensive. The shape of the sword also
15 allows actions difficult to achieve with existing sword designs.

It should be appreciated from the above discussion that there is provided a game
for either individual players to participate in as a team or players to play as a board
game or computer game. The game allows players to recreate hand to hand
combat situations where the combat may include more than one on one combat.
20 The game is simple to understand but can incorporate many of the tactics
employed in group combat thus increasing the complexity of interplay between
teams or players. In addition, a sword is provided for use in the game that has the
characteristics of being flexible, able to absorb at least some of the impact of a
strike on another object, and is structurally strong, thus providing an ideal weapon
25 for playing of combat style games including that of the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

Further aspects of the present invention will become apparent from the following

- 5 description which is given by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a picture of a traditional flag bearing Samurai warrior; and,

Figure 2 shows one preferred embodiment of a board game of the present invention; and,

10 Figure 3 shows a team of players or game pieces in a preferred embodiment of the present invention; and,

Figure 4 shows a combat situation under a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

15 Figure 5 shows a further combat situation under a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 shows a cross-sectional view of the blade section of a sword of one embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 7 shows a cross-sectional view of the handle section of a sword of one embodiment of the present invention; and,

20 Figure 8 shows the tip of the blade section of a sword of one embodiment of the present invention.

BEST MODES FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

For the purposes of the ensuing description a preferred embodiment will be described with reference to a flag bearer and the weapon of each player being a sword where the game is played in the team of player's scenario. It should be
5 appreciated that the flag bearer is one option for an objective and that other objectives may also be possible within the framework of the rules as described.

Further, for ease of description, the game will be described with reference to an embodiment where individual players combat one another in teams. This should not be seen as limiting as it should be appreciated that a board game or computer
10 version is also possible using the same concepts as the team player scenario.

Rules & Game Objectives

Referring to Figures 2, 3 and 5, the game is played by two teams of six players each generally indicated by arrow 1.

Each team may have a captain (not shown) to direct play and decide tactics and
15 strategy before and during each engagement.

The game may be played within a defined area 2 and it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the area can be either indoors or outdoors.

The area is marked with three centre lanes 3 which, in a real player scenario are approximately 10 metres long by 1 metre wide and are spaced apart by at least 1
20 metre. Forward position players 5 start at their team end of these lanes 3.

The area also has three rear starting positions 4 for the defenders 6 and flag bearer 7.

The Flag Bearer

The objective of the game is to capture the opposing team's flag (not shown) while preventing your own flag 11 from being captured. This is based in part on Samurai combat where Samurai often carried flags, see for example Figure 1.

- 5 The flag 11 is worn on the back of a flag bearer player 7 and 8 from each team. To win the flag 11, the flag bearer 7 or 8 must be defeated or expelled from the game.

Although the final objective is to defeat or expel the oppositions flag bearer 7 or 8, while at the same time preventing their own flag being lost, it is mainly achieved by expelling or defeating as many other players of the opposition team as possible.

10 **'Hitting out' or 'striking out' a Player**

To expel or defeat a player from the court a target area of their armour must be successfully struck with a sword. Target points are preferably pressure pads (not shown) located on the shoulder pads, helmet and centre of breast plate on each player.

- 15 It is envisaged that the pressure pads will register a hit when struck and then signal the hit player using a visual or an audio cue to the players, umpire(s) and spectators that the player has been hit out.

- Correspondingly, other signals or displays may also activate such as a player marker on a score board light up or extinguish so that it is obvious to spectators and officials which player has been defeated and/or expelled.

Once a player has been hit they must immediately disengage the action and leave the game area. If a player is hit by an accidental strike from a player that has already been disqualified, they are allowed to reset their pads if necessary and continue to play.

If a player fouls another illegally (such as by an illegal body contact such as a shoulder barge) the player may be disqualified from that engagement of the match as a whole. Determining if the play is a foul or unfair is likely to be a decision of an umpire or umpires (not shown).

- 5 If the foul or infringement has caused the position of the opposition's flag bearer (7 or 8) to be compromised in any way, then the umpires can replay the engagement or award the flag to the fouled team.

Player Positions and Initial Engagement

- At the start of each engagement, the two teams face each other as shown in
- 10 Figure 2 where: three forward position players 5 are located at one end of the central lanes 3, two back position players 6 are located on or adjacent to the rear markers 4, and one flag bearer 7 is located on or adjacent to a rear marker 4.

- At the conclusion of each engagement, players from each team may rotate positions within the team so that players have to play different positions on the
- 15 team.

The Forwards

The three forward position players 5 face their opposing forward position players 9 along a lane 3 on the area or board 2.

- A signal is given to start or engage for example from an umpire (not shown) and
- 20 each forward 5 advances on their opposition forward player 10.

Forward position players 5 or 10 cannot leave their lane 3 or engage anyone other than their opposition 5 or 10 during initial stages.

Once the forward position player 5 or 10 has defeated their initial opposition 5 or 10, they may then leave their lane and assist other players on the game area or

board 2, who in turn can defend themselves from multiple attackers, and of forward position players 5 or 10, cannot leave their own lane until their opposite 5 or 10 is defeated.

If a forward position player 5 or 10 steps outside of their lane before defeating their 5 opposition 5 or 10, they are defeated or expelled from the engagement; therefore a forward position player 5 or 10 can be defeated by being hit, or being forced outside their lane 3.

The Defenders and Flag Bearer

The back position players 6 and flag bearer 7 can move freely to engage the 10 opposition back position players 9 and/or flag bearer 8, or can take up a defensive posture so as not to risk the flag 11.

The back position players 6 or 9 and flag bearers 7 or 8 cannot however attack any forward position players 5 or 10 until that forward player 5 or 10 is free to leave their lane 3 and likewise, forward position players 5 or 10 cannot attack back 15 players 6 or 9 or the flag bearer 7 or 8 until they have defeated their opposing forward player 5 or 10.

Swords

One preferred embodiment for a sword is shown in Figures 6 to 8.

The sword includes a handle section 50 and a blade section 51. There is a central 20 core 52 common to both the handle 50 and blade sections 51 which is manufactured from bamboo or a synthetic material such as glass fibre rod or carbon fibre rod.

The sword has a rounded cutting edge formed from an outer layer material 53 located along the blade section 51 manufactured from a robust leather material or

alternatively a synthetic material such as rubber. The outer layer material 53 is attached 54 to the central core 52 along each side of the blade section 51 such that an air cavity 55 is left between the core 52 and material 53. The attachment method maybe by stitching 54 or by use of an adhesive. By having an air cavity 55, the sides of the blade section 51 are more defined and as a result blocking actions can be taken using the blade edge.

The blade section 51 cutting edge is also continuously curved (not shown) along the length of the blade section 51. This allows taking of the blade type actions on the opponents sword that would otherwise be difficult to achieve with a straight bladed sword.

The choice of bamboo for the core 52 and leather for the outer layer cutting edge 53 as well as incorporation of an air cavity 55 allow the sword to be ideally suited in terms of characteristics including flexibility, ability to absorb the impact of a strike, and structurally strong enough to be used in several engagements. It should be appreciated that other materials may also be used such as glass fibre rod core 52 and a rubber outer layer 53.

As shown in the Figures, the central core 52 has an approximately circular to elliptical cross section. The blade section 51 tapers from the base being approximately 25mm in diameter to the tip being approximately 20 mm in diameter.

20 The handle section 50 is formed from the central core 52 bamboo which is completely surrounded by the cutting edge leather material outer layer 53.

As shown in Figure 8, the tip of the blade section 50 has a rubber bung 56. This is included primarily for safety to avoid any sharp edges that may be of danger to the user or opponents. A similar bung 56 may be used at the base of the handle 25 section 50 (embodiment not shown).

Weapons are regularly examined or at least checked after each combat engagement and replaced if damaged.

It should be appreciated that other hand to hand type weapons may also be used without departing from the scope of the invention and, as the game develops,

- 5 alternative swords may also be developed such as synthetic compound swords, as long as quality and safety issues are not compromised.

Umpires

Due to the potentially complex nature of the action, it is envisaged that umpires will be responsible for different areas of play.

- 10 A central umpire will oversee the initial play by the forward position players 5 or 10 and any breakaway play not directly connected with a flag bearer 7 or 8.

Two other umpires will be responsible for play around each flag bearer 7 or 8. One umpire becomes senior to the other when both flag bearers 7 and 8 are caught up in the same action. This situation of seniority change is similar to American

- 15 Football where umpires change in seniority in multiple tackling situations.

Umpires would not be present on court, but run the side lines of the game area 2. They would be distinguishable from the players by a distinctive uniform, probably striped, or very similar to Baseball umpires.

- 20 They may carry a short type of sword which may be used for indicating start of play, players, or general direction of play, by cutting, pointing or sweeping movements. These swords would also incorporate a remote control function where a button could be pushed, while pointing at a specific player to expel them from the game area.

Alternatively, the umpire may use the sword to strike the players target point on their armour to remove them from the game area.

Scoring

- A point is scored when a flag 11 is won. This means that a player hits their
- 5 opposition's flag bearer 7 or 8, and is awarded the flag 11. At this stage the winner may be declared as the team that won their opposing teams flag 11.

Alternatively, play continues with at least one further engagement and the winning team is the team with the highest number of flag wins after multiple engagements.

It is envisaged that the number of engagements will be six i.e. the number of

10 engagements is the same as the number of players and thus each player plays in each possible position in the game.

- In a further alternative, play continues for a set period of time (e.g. 40 – 60 minutes) with as many engagements as fit into that time period, with the winner being the team with the highest number of flag wins.
- 15 Where a draw occurs for example after a pre-determined number of engagements or after the set time period, a winner may be determined by completing one further engagement or by an individual bout between a player from each team. Where an individual bout is completed, a centre lane 3 is used with each player starting at distal ends of the lane and advancing on each other as rapidly or cautiously as
- 20 they desire.

Own Goals

Although a superior number of players against an inferior number should be an advantage, the breadth of a sword swing may make it difficult to strike without hitting own team members.

A hit on a team member from the same team is like an own goal, it counts and the player hit is defeated or expelled from the engagement or match.

If a player drops their sword or has it knocked from their grasp, it is up to that player to retrieve it without being hit.

- 5 A weapon that is shattered beyond use results in that player leaving the court for the engagement or match.

From the above examples, it should be appreciated that the game provides a fast action team hand to hand combat game. It should also be appreciated that the game is easily adaptable to a board game whereby, for example two players play
10 one another along similar lines to the real player scenario but instead of individual players, the board game players control game pieces in order to combat one another.

Aspects of the present invention have been described by way of example only and it should be appreciated that modifications and additions may be made thereto
15 without departing from the scope thereof as defined in the appended claims.